



# Las Flores Community Garden

## Newsletter

### Inside this issue:

July 2023 - Volume 3, Issue 2

From the President	1
Upcoming Events	2
Garden Updates	2
Summer Gardening Tips and Guide	3
	4
Website	4
Recipe Corner	5

## News from the Garden

### From the President's Desk:

*I* LOVE this time of year. The gardens are lush and gorgeous! Isn't it amazing what can happen in 200 sq. feet of soil or less? Have you looked at our Easy Access plots? So much in such small space! Wonderful.

I commend you; your hard work is paying off. We have some fun things happening this summer. What's more fun than contests? Put your culinary skills to the test, or taste in this case. Salad contest in July, and Tomato -Tasting in August. See details below, and plan to participate. It's a great way to meet new friends, and talk with fellow gardeners. Stay hydrated please, and see you soon!

### Annual Salad Contest

July 22, 11:00 a.m. Bring your favorite salad w/ recipe (including your dressing). Salads can be made with fresh garden-grown and some store bought ingredients. The salad must contain at least 2 elements from your garden to qualify. Salads will be judged by Appearance, Taste, and Texture.

### Annual Tomato-Tasting Contest

August 19, 9:30 a.m. The BEST tomato will be crowned again this year, with 2nd and 3 place winners too. Bring your favorite tomatoes from your garden, and members will taste & choose the winners.

### Board of Directors:

**Susan Sundell**

- President

**Jan Fang**

- Vice President

**Laurie Miller**

- Secretary

**Debbie Rollins**

- Treasurer

**Betty Cruse**

- Plot Manager

### Plot Mgmt. Team

**Taty Valladares**

- Task List

**Jim Hervieux**

- Walk Through

### *This Issue's Contributors:*

Susan Sundell

Ania Pitula

Roberta Rials

### Thank You!

Susan Sundell - Editor

Roberta Rials - Publisher

## Calendar of Events

**Saturday, July 22 - 11:00 AM**

**Annual Salad Contest**

**Saturday, July 29 - 9:00 AM**

**Board Meeting**

**Saturday, August 5th-8:00 to 11:00 AM**

**Work Day**

**Saturday, August 19-9:30 AM**

**Annual Tomato -Tasting**



Best Summer Garden (and Best Winter Garden next year): Four Categories: Flowers, Vegetables, Most Variety, and Most Visually Appealing. This will be a photo contest that all members may vote on. So please start taking photos of your beautiful gardens or other favorites. Voting will start in September.

## Garden Updates

### CRPD Grant:

We have been approved of a \$5000 grant from CRPD. Capital Improvements include updating cameras, self-closing w/ keypad lock on Children's Garden, and StarLink Satellite internet. Thank you for the suggestions!

### Water in Hoses:

Our hoses burst when it is hot outside and water is not released from the heads after shutting off. Thank you Laura E for volunteering to laminate and place reminders to release the water.

### Orchard Update:

Beginning January 2024, orchard trees will lease for \$20, and berry bushes for \$10. All fees go directly to the orchard budget, and is a substantial increase. This insures supplies for orchardists and sustainability. All Orchard members have full harvesting right to the fruit on their tree(s), and may share with the community if they so wish.

### Compost Bins:

There are two areas for personal compost bins: the Children's Garden and under the Oak tree at the back of the Main Garden. CRPD will be pruning the oak tree for better accessibility soon. If you want to compost, please email Susan.

### Vacations/Time Away from Garden:

If you will be away from your garden for an extended period of time (over two weeks), please let Betty or Susan know when and who is watching your garden. It is the member's responsibility to find someone to take care of their garden. This helps us immensely if there is a break in an irrigation system.

### Trash

PLEASE take your trash to the large bins outside our South gate, separating accordingly. If you fill a plastic trash can, even half ways, take it out! Piling it up inside our gate shouldn't happen either, unless all the large bins are full. Athens comes every Wednesday morning. Green in green, trash in trash. We continue to find plastic, wire, and rocks in the green bins. Please comply so we can continue to receive the wonderful compost! New(er) member Susie I. offered to label all of our trash cans. Thank you Susie!

## Summer Gardening - Tips and Guide

*Courtesy of: Ania Pitula (Backyard Boss)*

**P**lanning a pasta night soon? Keep that pasta water handy and explore the benefits of using it to water your plants!

If you're looking for an innovative, eco-friendly, and cost-effective way to nurture your plants and provide them with optimal care, you'll want to keep your pasta water handy next time you're cooking. This starchy, nutrient-rich water leftover from boiling pasta can be highly beneficial for your plants. Whether you've got a backyard full of new blooms or an indoor potted jungle, discover why you should be using pasta water to water your plants!

As your pasta boils, numerous starches, minerals, and vitamins are released from it into the water. This nutrient-rich elixir makes for an effective natural fertilizer. Commercial fertilizers usually contain a balance of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. However, pasta water contains a much more [diverse level of nutrients](#) your plants will highly benefit from. Some of the unique nutrients found in pasta water that aren't normally found in store-bought fertilizer, include manganese, selenium, copper, magnesium, and iron. The influx of these essential minerals has been shown to stimulate plant growth and support healthy and vibrant leaf development.

The pH level of the soil plays a crucial role in a plant's ability to absorb nutrients effectively. Luckily, pasta water can help in maintaining an [optimal pH balance](#) in your plant soil. This is because the pH level of pasta water is quite close to the pH level of plant roots (around 7). As a result, the starch-rich content of the water helps to buffer the soil, preventing excessive acidity or alkalinity. This balance is essential for ensuring that your plants can absorb nutrients efficiently, leading to healthier and more vibrant foliage. In addition, the starch content feeds the good bacteria that's already living in your plant soil, which directly links to better soil fertility and resistance against potential disease.

Pasta water can also act as a natural pest deterrent for your plants. The starches in the water create a thin film on the plant's leaves, making it [less appealing to common pests](#) like aphids and spider mites. Additionally, the water's salt content can deter slugs and snails from damaging your precious plants. That being said, some plants are sensitive to salt content, so be mindful of this if you're planning on using salted or seasoned pasta water on your plants. A safer and highly recommended option is to use fermented pasta water, which will easily get rid of other common pests such as fruit flies and flea beetles. By using pasta water, you can protect your garden from unwanted invaders without relying on harmful, chemical pesticides.



By reusing the water you would otherwise drain from your pasta, you're contributing to a highly cost-effective and eco-friendly way of conserving water. With this more sustainable method, you can easily save money on expensive commercial fertilizers and plant foods. In addition, you can make use of existing resources instead of pouring gallons of [fresh water](#) onto your plants each week.

## Summer Gardening - Tips and Guide - continued

When watering your plants with pasta water, there are a few things you can do to ensure they receive the most amount of health benefits.

- Allow the pasta water to completely cool down before using it on your plants to prevent any shock from a sudden thermal change.
- Dilute the pasta water with an equal amount of fresh and cool water to avoid excessive starch buildup in the soil or on your plant leaves and stems.
- Use pasta water sparingly, as overwatering can lead to root rot and other fungal-based health issues. It's always a good idea to monitor your plants' soil moisture levels frequently and adjust them accordingly.
- Avoid using pasta water on any plants that prefer dry conditions, such as cacti and succulents.
- Use organic and unseasoned pasta water to ensure no harmful chemicals or additives are introduced to your garden.

Bursting with vitamins, minerals and nutrients, pasta water is a powerhouse resource that will help support your plant growth and vitality. Plus, it's a great way to introduce sustainable and cost-effective gardening practices to your plant care routine. So next time you're planning a pasta night, make sure to save the water, cool it off, and keep it handy for your next plant watering session.

### TIP

To make fermented pasta water fill up a jug  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the way with your boiled pasta water. Next add 1 teaspoon of sugar and 4 tablespoons of milk; allow the mixture to sit for four days and voila!

### Website

Reminder that all events are listed on our website, and Mary does a great job writing Blog posts. Her most recent post is another way to use zucchini. There is a LOT of information in her blog posts. Check it out!

The Newsletter is a great venue for all the Gardeners to stay in touch. Please share your knowledge, ideas, experience and interesting bits by submitting an article or forwarding info to Roberta Rials at

[robertarials@gmail.com](mailto:robertarials@gmail.com)

Thank you in advance!

## Recipe Corner

By: Roberta Rials



*here is never too much water in the pot when you decide to cook pasta...*

Boiling pasta is not a science, just put a big pot of cold water on the stove, add a little salt, and follow directions on the box. If it says, "al dente in 9 to 11 minutes" get it off the stove at the 10 minute mark and drain. If you are adding the cooked pasta to a sauce that requires another minute of cooking, get the pasta off the stove at the 9 minute mark. It is just that simple...

### **Pasta al Pomodoro e Basilico (Pasta with fresh Tomato and Basil)**

Ingredients:

- A few ripe tomatoes from your garden, chopped (San Marzano style preferred but not necessary)
- 2 or 3 cloves of garlic, peeled and crushed with the back of a knife
- A handful of fresh basil leaves
- 1/4 cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO) good quality
- Pinch of salt to taste
- Freshly crushed black pepper
- 1 LB. Penne pasta, good brand

Bring a big pot of cold water with a little salt to boil. In the meanwhile prepare the garlic and roughly chop the tomatoes. Sauté the garlic in olive oil until fragrant, add the chopped tomatoes and the basil leaves and cook on medium/low for about 20 minutes or until some of the liquid is reduced. Add salt to taste. Boil the pasta according to package direction and drain, reserving a ladle of pasta water for the sauce. Add ladle of pasta water to sauce, stir, add pasta and toss. In Italy this dish is traditionally served without grated cheese to preserve the immaculate taste of the fresh tomatoes. However, if you prefer adding freshly grated Parmesan or Romano cheese, do so by adding it directly to your sauté skillet. Toss and serve piping hot. Buon Appetito!

By: Susan Sundell

### **Zucchini "Applesauce"**

Idea for all that zucchini!

Do you have zucchini the size of a boat? Yah, we all do. I love this way to use up a lot of zucchini, but I cut the sugar to 1/4 cup (or to taste).

- 1 large zucchini
- 1/2 cup of sugar
- 1/4 cup vinegar
- 1 tsp. cinnamon